



“Be Content with What You Have”
(Hebrews 13:5-6)

Introduction: The Lord has told us through the author to the Hebrews this far that we should love one another with brotherly love; that we should love not only our brethren we know, but also those who are strangers by showing them hospitality, in order to make them friends; and that we should love our brethren who are further off as well, who are in prison or who are being mistreated for the sake of the Gospel by suffering with them and doing what we can to help them and to relieve their suffering. He also told us that we are to show our love to Him, and to our spouse, by receiving His gift of marriage with thankfulness and by trying to keep it pure, both in our hearts and in our actions. If we will love God and our neighbors, whoever they may be, as our Lord has told us to, then we will be doing everything that God wants of us, because love is what the Law is all about.

But now having reminded us of the centrality of love in the kingdom of God, the author now tells us that there is something we should not love, and that is money. Instead, he tells us that

We should be content with what we have, for if we have the Lord, we have everything that we need, for He has promised to take care of us.

I. He begins by giving us this command, “Let your character be free from the love of money” (v. 5).

- A. There is one thing we need to realize that will always be true as long as we live: Whatever we love, whatever has captivated our hearts, that will control our lives.
1. Have you ever wondered what it is that motivates most people to do the things they do?
 - a. Why do some devote their lives to being the best football, baseball, or basketball player they can be? Why do some devote their lives to watching these men play these games?
 - b. Why do others devote their lives to something else, such as some field of science, or business, or to some humanitarian cause?
 - c. Why are there still others who give up all their comforts in life to devote themselves to taking the Gospel to wherever the Lord would have them to take it?
 - d. The answer is because that thing, whatever it is, has captured their heart. There is something about it with which they have become enamored, something they see in it which is beautiful or desirable. And once it captures their heart, it compels them to do what they do.
 - e. Everyone does whatever they do because they see something in it which is desirable. But of course, just because they desire it, doesn't make it good. Our hearts can often lead us astray. It can draw us out to things which are not good for us, things which our minds even tell us are bad for us. Solomon writes, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). If your heart is good, it will desire good things. But if it is bad, it will desire bad things. But realize that even the best Christian is a mixture of good and evil. We must watch over our hearts!
 - f. Some who profess Christ pursue the things they do because they want to glorify God, and that is good. But there are also those who do even the best things they do for the wrong reasons, and that is bad, no matter how good the things are that they do.
 - g. And so first of all examine your heart to see what motivates you to do the things you do. Why do you want to do the things you do? What is it that makes those things attractive to you? Is your motivation love for God? Is it the desire to glorify Him? Or is it the desire to love and glorify yourself?
 2. The author tells us tonight that there is one particular desire, one particular motivation which we must avoid at all costs, and that is the love for money. He writes, “Let your character be free from the love of money.” Or more literally, “Let your character be free from greed.”
 - a. Now there are many other things which he could have told us to watch out for, many other serious sins which a man can fall into which don't have anything to do with this. But this is certainly one of the biggest temptations we will have to face in life.
 - b. There are so many people who love money. Why?
 - (i) Some love it because it makes them powerful. Some of the most influential people who have ever lived had that influence because they were wealthy.
 - (ii) Others love it because of what they can get with it: a nice car, a nice house, nice vacations, nice things for the kids. Needless to say many a man has attracted a beautiful wife because of his

money.

- (iii) Still others love it for what it is in itself. You will recall the character in Dicken's *A Christmas Carol* by the name of Ebenezer Scrooge. He loved his money. He loved to make money, he loved to count money, but he hated to spend it, and would never give it away. He really didn't want it because of what he could buy with it, he wanted it because he liked having it. Believe it or not, there really are people in the world like Scrooge.
- c. But obviously, this is far too poor a love to have. The author to the Hebrews tells us, "Let your character be free from the love of money, from greed." Don't let this be what directs your life. It's not that money is bad, or that there aren't any good things you can do with it, or that working hard for money is bad. It only becomes sinful when what motivates you to work for it is greed, when it is the money you are after and not the good things you can do with it for the glory of God.
- d. Paul writes to Timothy, "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang" (1 Tim. 6:10). You might wonder how someone can wander away from the faith for the love of money, but it does happen. Remember, not everyone who professes to be a Christian is truly a Christian. There are many who think they are who really are not. One of the ways that their hypocrisy is exposed is by being drawn away by money. There are many other things which the devil uses to tempt false professors away from the church and away from the means by which they might be saved. Money is not the only one. But it is a very powerful one, so powerful that Paul wrote a special direction to warn Timothy about it, that he might warn others. Therefore, be on your guard, for you are only human.

II. And this bring us to the second point: How are we to keep from being tempted by the love of money?

- A. The author first writes, "Be content with what you have" (v. 5).
1. Contentedness is the best defense against greed. To be content means to be satisfied, to have enough, to not need anything else to make me happy.
 2. What is the root of all greed except discontentedness, not being happy or satisfied with what you have. When you are no longer satisfied with what you have, then you begin to look around for something else. But if what you have satisfies, then why look anywhere else? You already have that which makes you happy.
- B. Well then, if contentedness is the best defense, how can we be content?
1. Well realize first that the Lord has already given to us everything we need.
 - a. He hasn't necessarily given to us everything we might want. That is why He is here warning us here against greed, and reminding us to be content.
 - b. But He has given us everything we need. At least, He promised that He would, if we are doing what He told us we must do, and that is seek first His kingdom. Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). He will feed you, He will clothe you, He will take care of you, if you will put His kingdom first, that is, if you will seek to promote His kingdom in your own life and in this world before anything else. Now if He does this, then we will lack nothing.
 2. But realize secondly, that the Lord has given to us something else which is much better, something which is much more satisfying than anything else we could possibly have, He has given us Himself. He has promised to be with us and to help us. The author to the Hebrews continues, "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid, what shall man do to me?'" (v. 5-6).
 - a. If we have the Lord, what else do we need? We have already seen that the Lord has promised to take care of us, if we are really His children, for if we really are His children, we will put His kingdom first and try our best to live the life He calls us to live. We won't live it perfectly. Certainly there will be times when we will miserably fail. But we will continue to move forward. We will learn from our falls into sin, and we will grow in holiness and advance God's kingdom.
 - b. But if He now adds to this His presence and His help, what more could we possibly need? God says that will never leave us, and He says it in the strongest possible way. The Greek literally reads, "I

shall by no means ever desert you, nor shall I ever by any means abandon you.” And the reason He says this is to give us confidence, so that we might boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, I shall not be afraid. What shall man do to me?”

- c. Now if the Lord has promised to be with us, to be our God and to take us as His people, and if He has promised to be our helper, what more could we possibly need to be content? The greatest desire that the regenerate heart has is for God. God promises here that we will have Him in life, and we will have Him in death. He also promises that while we are in this world He will provide for us and protect us. What more could we want?
- d. One of the reasons people hoard money is because they believe money will give them security. If they only have enough of it, they will be able to get everything they need: food, shelter, medicine, and maybe even some protection. Money can provide some of the things a person might need. But how can you guarantee that you can hold on to your money? Wise king Solomon once wrote, “There is a grievous evil *which* I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt. When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him. As he had come naked from his mother’s womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand” (Ecc. 5:13-15).
- e. And what about protection for your soul? What about providing for your future after this life is over? Money can’t do that. Again, Solomon writes, “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death” (Prov. 11:4), and “He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf” (v. 28). Money can’t wash away your sins. It can’t buy you a home in heaven. Only God can. He is the only One who can guarantee all of these things for you, as well as the things you need to live in this life. God has said that He will never leave us. He has promised to be our helper, and since He has, we don’t need anything else. If we have Him, we have everything. *Without Him, whatever we might think we have is really worthless.*
- f. Remember also what Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).
- g. And so let your character be free from the love of money. Instead, love the One who is able to do far more than money ever could. Make sure that there is nothing which captivates your heart and motivate our life but the *love of God*. If he is first and foremost in your life, then the other loves which the devil holds out to tempt you will never cause you to fall. Amen.